



This month, consider adoption

Monday, November 24, 2003

Hundreds of children seek permanent homes with loving parents.

Adoption in the United States has gotten a bad rap in the last several years.

Some high-profile cases of birth parents who sue to get their children back -- and, in some cases, doing so successfully -- have soured many would-be adoptive parents from trying to adopt children from the U.S.

And abortion, coupled with the number of teenage mothers in the U.S. who have decided to keep their babies, has reduced the number of healthy infants -- the kind of children most prospective parents are seeking -- available for adoption.

But the number of couples seeking to adopt children has not gotten smaller. Many of them are now going overseas -- to China, Korea, Russia, Romania and any place economic or social dislocation has created a large number of orphans -- to adopt babies.

Tuesday is Michigan Adoption Day, a time to celebrate adoptive parents and their children and to promote adoption.

In Kalamazoo County the day will be observed at Crosstown Center in Kalamazoo, where judges will finalize several adoptions and a panel discussion will be held in which those involved with adoption -- parents, adoptees, agency officials and birth parents -- will answer questions about the experience.

Last year, the state Family Independence Agency placed 2,833 children in adoptive homes, 2,000 of them in sibling groups.

According to the FIA, there are 4,584 permanent wards of the state awaiting adoption. Some of them have been chosen by families and are awaiting finalization of their adoptions. But the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange lists about 400 permanent state wards who don't have adoptive families ready to take them.

Of course, few of the children are infants. Some are older children, even in their teens. Some have special needs -- physical, mental, emotional and learning impairments. All of them need permanent homes with loving parents. Information about and photos of many of the children can be seen on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Web site: www.mare.org.

Tuesday is a good day for would-be parents to open their homes and hearts to children who need them.

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